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to the Academy in the way of a cure. At his particular request the Council of the Academy has forwarded his letter to THE ART WORLD which publishes it with a hope that a way be found to make the matter effective. A plan of the sort that Mr. Lothrop has outlined may do something to improve the average of work at the spring and winter exhibitions; in any case it should get the painters and sculptors who live in other cities of the Union in closer touch with those who work near or in New York.

Boston, November 25.

TO THE COUNCIL OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF DESIGN:

Gentlemen—We would like to make a few suggestions to your Academy from our side of the fence.

First: We would suggest that your Academy appoint one or more Judges of Art for Boston and other prominent cities who should act as preliminary Judges for their respective districts. They should be allowed to select a specified number of paintings for guaranteed specially allotted spaces for the work of such districts. Each applicant might be charged a small fee for such inspection of their work—if such charges are needed. This plan would save the distant artists large bills for freight, expressage, agents, etc., which are now often lost expense. Express companies have shown themselves very evasive of financial obligations when they have smashed up crates of paintings, frames, etc. In three cases we could only collect once for our charges. In two other cases they fought disreputably and in one paid only five dollars on a fifty-dollar claim, despite a powerful fight for the rights of the artist.

Many artists of the first class will not ship their work under present conditions. I have known of many refusals by old experienced artists.

Second: Judges who are to pass on paintings under any system should be assisted by fair scientific Printed Standards of measurements and percentages. A painting should be rated scientifically by some recognized Art Standard and not be the football of whims, caprices, etc. Often rare paintings made after months of labor are thrown out and some cheap daub of a "Ma and Baby" is handed bouquets of honor. We believe that if your Academy adopts some national system of division of territory, or of area, population, etc., and gives to each such district its quota (if securable) in fair proportion, it would protect the artists in each district by local judges; these could guarantee some form of security and have forms printed which would rate paintings as to originality, quality of colors, harmony of design, color, etc., defects or imperfections. Proper allowance should be made for size, permanency of colors, to guarantee compliance of works to recognized standards of permanency, strength, etc. Judges might visit local studios or residences and save the artists large sums of money. Under the present system it costs about ten to twenty-five dollars to ship and reship a small 2x3-foot painting from Boston to you, not to mention the value of the painting or the time of the artist. Even at that—the Exhibition may be too crowded to exhibit the most meritorious works, and the artist is "stung" all round and naturally "gets sore"! Many artists would prefer to pay small sums for local inspection and thus save costs of transportation, etc.

Third: Fugitive and transient colors should be outlawed by all art associations. No prizes, medals, awards, cash donations or even honors should be given to art works of this low order. We believe the time has come when decisive steps should be taken to place inferior, defective and fugitive canvases in the outlaw class. Many art associations have placed themselves in wrong with the art-buying public and with art museums and rich art buyers by allowing them to be robbed and deceived with such fugitive and transient colors; they are inferior art works. Many high-priced paintings are to-day hopeless art wrecks after only twenty or twenty-five years of service. They were sometimes awarded fine medals, big prizes and high prices, but the paintings were really humbugs and the buyers defrauded. We believe that the honor and prestige of your Academy is at stake and that all artists should be given printed lists telling what are the fugitive and transient colors and why their use is prohibited in the Academy work.

The London firm of Winsor & Newton publish such lists and will supply them to any art association upon request. The fact is that bombastic and loud-mouthed artists have been allowed to get away with some rotten work. Your

association, other museums and millionaire buyers have been "stung" badly by these swindlers. We believe that the stamp of efficiency should be placed on art works and no painting should be granted any honors which does not stand the said test of durable painting—colors which will be just as good a hundred years from now as thirty days from now. We ask that these art standards shall be made an official system of all art academies, associations, museums, etc. By no other system can we guarantee the perfection and the permanency of American Art.

Yours truly

GEORGE E. LOTHROP

TURQUOISE MOSAICS OF THE INDIANS

The Indians of North and South America are often gifted with a strong, intuitive sense for color and even to-day surprize one with their success in making pottery, textiles and other objects beautiful. At an early date those of Mexico discovered the qualities of opals and turquoise. At Los Cerrillos in New Mexico there is a mountain they called *Chalchihuitl* after the precious material found there. From the workings it is evident that the natives resorted thither for many ages in order to get the brilliant green or blue mineral and the result is that great numbers of wooden objects studded and set with turquoise have been found for welcome exhibits in the museums. In the September bulletin issued by the Pan-American Union at Washington an illustrated paper by Prof. J. E. Pogue of Northwestern University allows one to see what a varied use was made of the turquoise as personal ornaments and for incrusting objects with color, even to the point of decorations of temples. In addition they used jadeite, malachite, garnet, obsidian and shell. Masks as well as other objects carried in their dances were inlaid very richly and when further decorated with tufts of feathers must have offered an example of barbaric magnificence not lightly to be ignored. Dwarfed by their surroundings and their education in the matter of color-sense the whites do not compete with many of the less civilized races whose feeling for color is fostered instead of being repressed by their religion and modes of life. Turquoise is a favorite adjunct to the decoration of charms, amulets and fetiches. The Navajos, we are told by Prof. Pogue, "have a pretty belief that turquoise is particularly sacred to the wind spirit and they offer many stones to this deity whose anger must thus be appeased in order that the wind may stop blowing and rain result. When the wind is blowing the Indians say it is searching for turquoise."

SUBSTITUTES FOR WOOD IN HOUSES

A report made by Mr. Rolf Theland to the Department of Agriculture on materials such as steel, concrete and hollow tiles which have been taking the place of wood for houses and furniture contains facts that will surprise many people who have not followed the drift of home-building. The use of cement for concrete houses has increased 290 per cent. since 1900, that of fired clay 170 per cent. "At the best" he reports "the wooden building is no more than holding its own while the total building curve is rising. Retail lumber dealers estimate the decrease in sales of lumber for construction

purposes due to substitution to have been in the neighborhood of 13 per cent. between 1907 and 1914 alone." Even roofing shingles of wood are taking the downward trend compared with other materials and the tendency is to make the wooden trim of interiors give way to metal and concrete. This change must favor not merely greater safety from fire but favor health, because wood absorbs and holds dampness and microbes.

We should be still more impressed if this exchange of wooden for concrete and hollow-tile homes were accompanied by a better understanding of the capabilities of these materials for beautiful and original work; but architects and home-designers are few and far between who can get it out of their heads that concrete construction is the same as wooden. Of course this is not so. Yet we see costly villas put up which are literal translations of wooden architecture, just productions for wood uttered in concrete. Such architects and designers lose great advantages because they have failed to study the points wherein the concrete house can be made artistically as well as practically superior to the frame building. Concrete can be handled with the utmost ease; at little cost it can follow the most imaginative design. Costly brick-work for chimneys is practically suppressed. Space is given on exterior walls for sculptures in low relief or for mosaics in color; on inner walls for mural paintings, architectural motifs; on floors for tessellated pavements.

We are very slow to take advantage of all these points in practically non-destructible buildings on which decoration can be lavished with a certainty of permanence, perhaps because we cling unconsciously to wood with all its weaknesses and perishability, its liability to leak, its inability to keep out the heat and the cold. We have the wooden house in our ancestry. Half a century has gone by since the advent of "armored concrete" yet only now is a preponderance of safe and sane materials over wood to be recorded and, unable to adjust ourselves to the new stuff, we are timid under the spell of tradition—lame on the art side. The practical superiority of the material has finally forced concrete upon us, but where are the signs that we realize what a chance this material gives for greater beauty in house and home?

SOME RECENT BOOKS

Ancient Times. A History of the Early World. By James Henry Breasted, Ph.D. The attempt to comprise what is known of the past history of mankind in Europe from the first appearance of human beings down to the ruin of the Eastern and Western Roman Empires within a handy little octavo of some 700 pages is an undertaking that requires a very uncommon knowledge of the latest discoveries in Asia, Africa and Europe, as well as the facts and fictions handed down by the historians of Greece and Rome. Materials are so abundant that such a plan might appear impossible except by the use of dates, lists and barren statements too dry to contemplate. The problem was complicated by the necessity of producing a text-book that would meet the requirements of schools, each chapter being followed by a series of "questions"

intended to supply a review of the main points of the chapter. This was the task: condensation and thoroughness without loss to the reader and student of freshness of interest.

Fortunately in Dr. Breasted of Chicago University, well-known for certain delightful volumes on ancient Egypt, the person was found to produce what may be termed a model text-book of the sort, in which the curious student can never complain of dryness of style or that impression of lack of proportion which is often made by able and excellent works that deal with kindred subjects. Indeed it is the marshaling of his materials and the reference of them to certain big lines of thought—migrations of races, nations and tribes, distribution of mankind through the centuries and over the continents—that offer one of the most attractive features of the book. The reader is not allowed to forget, because of the complicated facts presented, the larger traits of the whole, viz.: the evolution of the white races that now hold Europe, Africa, America and other parts of the globe. Particularly illuminating is his division of the old habitats of the races and nations of Western Asia into the *grasslands* of the South and the *grasslands* of the North and his reference of the old wars before the Romans to the struggle of tribes and nations to win and hold these favored lands. By such means he gives the reader a set of larger lines on which to range the multiplicity of facts that make up the history of the Oriental past.

On page 271 one reads that the Phœnician alphabet had no vowels but the chart on page 272 includes A, E and O in the list the Greeks received; is not this a mistake? Page 278 the cardinal office of Apollo as *healer-god* is overlooked and the fierce side of Athena pointing to her origin in a demon of the night symbolized by the owl is not brought out. Page 292 the allusion to the use of wigs by the Greeks in imitation of the Egyptians has a reference which fails to refer. Page 408 the gesture of the statue of Apollo with the lizard is taken to be that of a boy throwing a stone at the lizard; but it has been better explained by an arrow or tickling-straw.

The volume is a model of compact information, with plenty of attractions for the eye, to illustrate and fix in memory the facts so far as we know them. Eight color-prints and half a hundred maps, for the most part colored, and several hundred cuts in the text furnish a brave show and help to make a bright text still brighter. Dr. Breasted has not neglected hints as to religions, literatures and arts, enough to whet the curiosity of students and send them to the books that are given in the ample bibliography at the end. He has been helped in the production of this little guide to the Aryan and Semitic past by various scholars to whom he gives his thanks in the preface. (*Boston and New York: Ginn & Company, \$1.60.*)

West Point, an Intimate Picture. By Robert Charlwood Richardson, Jr., Captain, 2d Cavalry, U. S. Army. The writer was Assistant Professor of English at West Point and had occasion to renew his acquaintance with his *alma mater*, so that he does not call on reminiscences of cadet days alone to describe the famous military academy from inside and as it exists to-day. With the aid of some three dozen illustrations from photographs